

Claims

1 1. Method for controlling network devices via a MMI, **characterized by the steps of:**

generating and at least partially displaying a hierarchical view of icons of all devices (23-35; 76a-76j; 101-127) connected to the network and/or services

5 (24a-24c, 42, 43, 43a-43g, 44, 45, 46a-46o; 47-74, 75a-75h) corresponding to the devices, and

coupling each of said icons with operating functions of the associated device (23-35; 76a-76j; 101-127) and/or service (24a-24c, 42, 43, 43a-43g, 44, 45, 46a-46o; 47-74, 75a-75h), respectively, wherein said devices and/or services

10 are operatable from said hierarchical view.

2. Method according to claim 1, **characterized by** recognizing a sub-network (21; 1-6) being integrated in said network via a bridge (128-131) and integrating said sub-network (21; 1-6) as an icon in said hierarchical view

15 of icons similar to said devices and/or services, wherein said icon assigned to said sub-network (21; 1-6) has a higher order than icons assigned to devices (23-35) and/or services (24a-24c, 42, 43, 43a-43g) of said sub-network.

SubAI 20 3. Method according to claim 1 or 2, **characterized in that** a device (23-35; 76a-76j; 101-127) and/or service (24a-24c, 42, 43, 43a-43g, 44, 45, 46a-46o; 47-74, 75a-75h) is operatable by drag and drop operations or by cut/copy and paste operations.

25 4. Method according to claims 1 or 2, **characterized in that** a device (23-35; 76a-76j; 101-127) and/or service (24a-24c, 42, 43, 43a-43g, 44, 45, 46a-46o; 47-74, 75a-75h) is operatable via context sensitive menus (46; 75, 76) shown in said hierarchical view after selecting the icon associated with said device and/or service.

30 5. Method according to claim 3 or 4, **characterized in that** after operation at least one control signal and/or at least one data stream is sent from one device (101; 106; 108) to at least one other device (115; 102; 105).

6. Method according to anyone of the preceding claims, **characteriz d in that** said hierarchical view of icons is organized according to predetermined

1 user-selectable rules.

7. Method according to claim 6, **characterized in that** said hierarchical
view of icons is organized depending on the kind of said devices (23-35; 101-
5 127) and/or sub-networks (21; 1-6) connected to the network.

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10 8. Method according to claim 6 or 7, **characterized in that** said
hierarchical view of icons is organized depending on the kind of services (47-
74, 75a-75h) being available in correspondence with said devices (23-35; 76a-
76j; 101-127).

15 9. Method according to anyone of the preceding claims, **characterized in
that** the AV/C protocol is used for controlling the devices (23-35; 76d-76j;
102-110, 114, 116-119, 121-126) and/or services (24a-24c, 42, 43, 43a-43g,
44, 45).

20 10. MMI for controlling network devices, **characterized in that** it is adapted
to perform the method as defined in anyone of claims 1 to 9.

25 11. Computer program product comprising computer program means
adapted to execute all steps defined in anyone of claims 1 to 9, when said
computer program product is executed on a computer (101).

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